



VII. Marriage & Divorce

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Beginning in 1997, Louisiana residents applying for marriage licenses were given a choice between a traditional marriage and a covenant marriage. A covenant marriage differs from a traditional marriage in that the couple agrees to complete premarital counseling and signs a notarized affidavit in which they agree to seek marital counseling if problems develop during the marriage and to accept a limited set of grounds for legal separation or divorce.

In 1998, a total of 39,544 marriages occurred in Louisiana, a decrease of 118 marriages from the 1997 total of 39,662. Six hundred nine of the 1998 marriages were covenant marriages. Louisiana's 1998 marriage rate was 9.1 marriages per 1,000 population. In the 1990s, state marriage rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates.

Louisiana divorce reports are submitted each year by approximately 75% of the state's 64 parishes, and many of the certificates that are submitted contain incomplete information. In 1998, 45 parishes reported a total of 12,526 divorces to the Vital Records Registry. No reports were submitted by 19 of the state's 64 parishes.

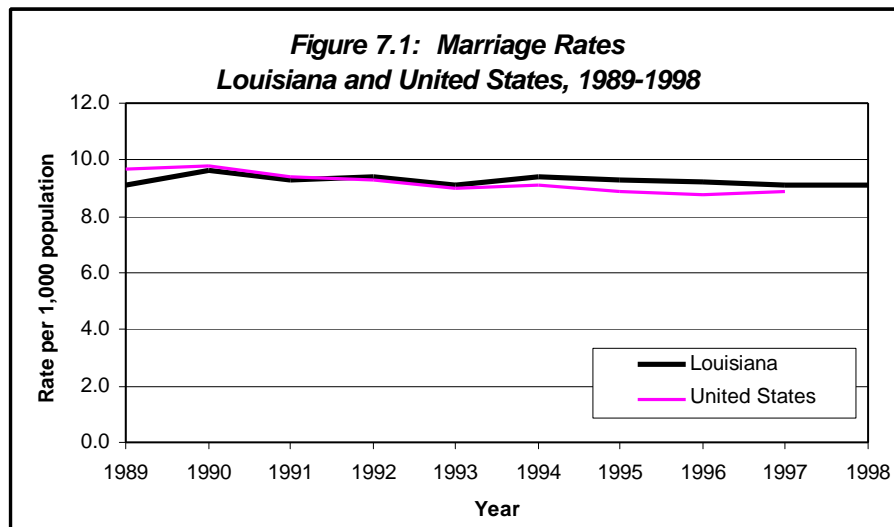
Table 7.1: Marriage Counts and Rates Louisiana and United States, 1989-1998			
Year	Louisiana		United States
	Number	Rate* +	Rate*
1989	38574	9.1	9.7
1990	40443	9.6	9.8
1991	39161	9.3	9.4
1992	40053	9.4	9.3
1993	39364	9.1	9.0
1994	40405	9.4	9.1
1995	40516	9.3	8.9
1996	40221	9.2	8.8
1997	39662	9.1	8.9
1998	39544	9.1	NA

*Rate per 1,000 population

+Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

M a r r i a g e & D i v o r c e



Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

TABLE 7.2: MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1998					
PARISH	MARRIAGES			DIVORCES BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE
	BY PARISH OF ISSUE OF LICENSE	BY PARISH OF OCCURRENCE	COVENANT		
STATE	39544	39544	609	12526	88
ACADIA	493	533	4	239	0
ALLEN	228	235	1	*	*
ASCENSION	785	752	8	358	0
ASSUMPTION	175	185	1	*	*
AVOUELLES	355	367	6	*	*
BEAUREGARD	340	334	7	170	1
BIENVILLE	102	114	1	76	0
BOSSIER	771	961	37	598	0
CADDO	2290	2002	54	1079	4
CALCASIEU	2149	2029	34	*	*
CALDWELL	115	117	4	69	4
CAMERON	81	116	0	40	0
CATAHOULA	117	120	0	39	4
CLAIBORNE	123	133	1	71	0
CONCORDIA	217	204	4	5	0
DESOTO	206	235	3	*	*
E BATON ROUGE	3493	3278	91	1923	1
EAST CARROLL	44	70	1	26	0
E FELICIANA	143	176	3	82	0
EVANGELINE	269	299	6	101	6
FRANKLIN	181	183	0	121	0
GRANT	147	209	0	*	*
IBERIA	625	633	6	*	*
IBERVILLE	217	267	2	*	*
JACKSON	128	118	1	1	0
JEFFERSON	3896	3519	18	2061	17
JEFF DAVIS	295	297	2	136	0
LAFAYETTE	1742	1568	36	*	*
LAFOURCHE	671	646	6	338	0
LASALLE	167	167	2	81	0
LINCOLN	348	310	9	176	3
LIVINGSTON	797	915	20	*	*
MADISON	150	133	2	53	1
MOREHOUSE	197	209	4	148	1
NATCHITOCHES	360	346	5	155	0
ORLEANS	4783	5289	33	336	0
OUACHITA	1242	1207	44	955	2
PLAQUEMINES	136	192	1	123	0
POINTE COUPEE	156	189	4	82	1
RAPIDES	1206	1176	14	657	10
RED RIVER	105	95	4	1	0
RICHLAND	158	174	3	*	*
SABINE	235	252	1	90	0
ST BERNARD	635	589	3	343	0
ST CHARLES	345	306	3	221	0
ST HELENA	67	59	1	*	*
ST JAMES	150	202	1	38	0
ST JOHN	262	290	4	4	0
ST LANDRY	729	743	7	239	24
ST MARTIN	290	346	0	55	0
ST MARY	490	508	6	*	*
ST TAMMANY	1756	1703	17	*	*
TANGIPAHOA	876	804	6	*	*
TENSAS	42	55	0	*	*
TERREBONNE	915	950	6	531	0
UNION	162	182	12	99	0
VERMILION	425	446	8	203	0
VERNON	573	591	9	108	8

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PARISH	MARRIAGES			DIVORCES BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE
	BY PARISH OF ISSUE OF LICENSE	BY PARISH OF OCCURRENCE	COVENANT		
WASHINGTON	465	473	20	*	*
WEBSTER	358	330	12	152	1
W BATON ROUGE	237	162	6	*	*
WEST CARROLL	76	87	1	*	*
W FELICIANA	100	170	0	46	0
WINN	153	166	4	97	0
OUT OF STATE	-	28	-	*	*

*NO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT DATA REPORTED BY CLERK OF COURT